



Special points of interest:

- Administrative Report!
- Meet your fellow Middle Eastern Commissioner
- Emergency Mortgage Assistance
- Business Delegation from Bahrain
- Appointment of Secretary of Department of Juvenile Services

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Keeping up with the Middle Eastern Commission

Message from the Commission

On behalf of the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs we would like to wish everybody a "Ramadan Mubarak." As the Muslims in our community are celebrating this holy month, the Commission is looking forward to continuing working and serving our state.

In most recent news, the Commission was afforded the opportunity to participate in a recent visit from a Bahraini business delegation. The delegation represented the Economic Development Board and was hosted in the State House by Lt. Governor Anthony Brown.

There is more information about the trip and the delegation included in this newsletter. The Commission hopes to maintain this relationship along

with establishing new relationships with various delegations across the region.

In addition to this, the Commission is looking forward to hosting a "Middle Eastern American Summit" in late November. The goal of the summit is to bring together the community, community leaders, state and local resources and elected officials to discuss the needs and concerns of Maryland Middle Eastern American residents.

The Commission is interested in beginning a dialog between our community and the State in regards to economic development, workforce development, healthcare and issues facing our youth and aging citizens.

Our next scheduled meeting

has been moved from September 27, due to the observance of Rosh Hashanah, to Thursday, September 22 from 6 to 9pm. The meeting location will be announced and to stay informed, please visit our website at: middleeastern.maryland.gov



The Commission is also officially on Facebook and Twitter. Follow us at: [GOCI_MiddleEast](https://www.facebook.com/GOCI_MiddleEast) to stay updated on our day to day initiatives!

Statement on June Job Report

On July 22, Governor Martin O'Malley issued the following statement on the U.S. Department of Labor's release of jobs data for the month of June. Maryland's employers shed 300 jobs, while the state's unemployment rate remained well below the national average of 9.2 percent at 7.0 percent:

"The jobs report released today shows little change in the job level from May, but we continue to see signs that Maryland is better positioned than most states. There are now 21,000 more Marylanders who are employed than at the start of the year and our unemployment rate remains significantly

below the national level. Just last month, the US Chamber of Commerce rated Maryland one of the top five "Enterprising States" for job, income and economic growth.

"This report underscores that we must continue to work to create and save jobs in Maryland. This is why last month we launched FastTrack to help speed up the jobs recovery by making it easier for businesses to grow and create jobs in our state.

"What we cannot do is allow partisan politics to undermine the jobs recovery. Congress must act now to achieve bal-

anced, bi-partisan solution to the debt crisis so that we're not driven needlessly into default, killing the recovery. The data shows how precarious the jobs recovery is around the country. For instance, 29 states' unemployment rates increased. To move forward, we must remain focused on job creation, not political gamesmanship."



Emergency Mortgage Assistance Still Available to Maryland Homeowners

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Raymond A. Skinner reiterated on July 20 that homeowners have until mid-September to submit their application to the state's Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program. The reminder comes as the deadline for a similar program by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Neighborhoods fast approaches. Under HUD's Emergency Homeowners' Loan Program, Pre-Applicant Screening Worksheets are due by July 22. Launched in June, the EHLP is designed to help homeowners who are at risk of foreclosure in 27 states across the country, including Washington, DC and Puerto Rico.

In October 2010, HUD made a separate announcement of awards to five states including Maryland that would go to the creation of individual loan programs aimed at assisting homeowners who have lost income and are behind on their mortgage payments. In April, Governor Martin O'Malley announced that Maryland's \$39 million award would be distributed through its Emergency

Mortgage Assistance Program. The EMA program assists homeowners who are facing foreclosure due to job loss or a decrease in wages, including those who lost income due to illness. Loans are provided in the payment of up to 12 months of arrears, including delinquent taxes and insurance, and up to 24 months going forward, with a maximum combined total of \$50,000. The deadline for Maryland's EMA program is September 30, at which time loan applications must be approved and funds must be committed. Because the EMA application process takes an average of two weeks, homeowners are encouraged to submit their applications no later than mid-September to ensure a full and fair review.

"Maryland's EMA Program can be such an important resource for many homeowners that we wanted to clear up any confusion about HUD's deadline and our deadline," said Secretary Skinner. "We continue to encourage every homeowner who has involuntarily lost employment and who's behind in his or her mortgage to learn more about EMA and seek help from one of the many approved

housing counseling agencies around the state."

Prospective applicants must meet certain prequalification requirements. Homeowners will be able to access assistance in completing their application by working with specially trained housing counseling agencies approved by DHCD as well as at various foreclosure prevention events.

For more details on Maryland's Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program or to find a housing counseling agency near you or an upcoming EMA event, please visit the HOPE website at www.mdhope.org or call the HOPE hotline (877) 462-7555.

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development works with partners to finance housing opportunities and revitalize great places for Maryland citizens to live, work and prosper. To learn more about DHCD programs, log on to www.mdhousing.org.



"The EMA program assists homeowners who are facing foreclosure due to job loss or a decrease in wages..."

Shop Maryland—The State's Tax Free Week

The second Sunday of August to the following Saturday is designated as Shop Maryland Week each year. That means qualifying apparel and footwear \$100 or less are exempt from the Maryland 6% sales tax. This year, Shop Maryland Week is August 14-20. Accessory items are not included.

Additionally, there will be a tax-free three-day weekend during

which the sales and use tax will not apply to the sale of any Energy Star Product or solar water heater. This tax-free weekend will occur the weekend of February 18, 2012, through February 20, 2012.

Energy Star Product means an air conditioner, clothes washer or dryer, furnace, heat pump, standard size refrigerator, compact fluorescent light bulb,

dehumidifier, or programmable thermostat that has been designated as meeting or exceeding the applicable Energy Star Efficiency requirements developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.

For more information, visit: www.comp.state.md.us

Governor Martin O'Malley Appoints New Secretary of Department of Juvenile Services



Sam Abed
Secretary
Department of
Juvenile Services

"...Our most solemn obligation is to protect the safety of our citizens..."

In February, Governor Martin O'Malley announced the appointment of Sam Abed as Maryland's Secretary of Juvenile Services. This appointment maintains the Governor's consistent approach to appointing members of his Executive Cabinet who represent a diverse cross-section of talents, skills, and background.

"I am proud to announce Sam as the new secretary for our Department of Juvenile Services," said Governor O'Malley. "As public servants, our most solemn obligation is to protect the safety of our citizens. And in these challenging times, when we must do more with less and develop new and innovative ways to serve the people of our State, I am grateful that Sam chose to step forward and use his many talents to help us continue to make progress for Maryland's most vulnerable youth and their families."

"Only through effectively working together can DJS achieve successful outcomes for Maryland's youth," said Abed. "I look forward to solidifying relationships with our partners as well as developing a sense of team within the Department."

The O'Malley-Brown Administration's strategic goals include the reduction of juvenile homicides and violent crime in Maryland by 25 percent by the end of 2012. As the new DJS secretary, Abed will help lead efforts to partner with local law enforcement as well as other child-serving agencies to improve reductions in violent juvenile crimes and further reduce the juvenile homicide rates in Maryland. He will also concentrate on efforts to increase the number of treatment beds in Mary-

land so all the youth served by DJS are treated by a competent and professional staff.

"Sam did great work for our administration as Chief Deputy Director for the Department of Juvenile Justice in Virginia and I know he will serve the people of Maryland with the same passion and dedication," said former Virginia Governor and current DNC Chairman Timothy Kaine. "It's my pleasure to join Governor O'Malley in congratulating Sam on his new post."

Abed served at the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice for nearly five years. He comes to Maryland's Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) with exceptional knowledge and experience, having held various leadership roles while at the Department under then-Governor Timothy Kaine as well as current Governor Bob McDonnell. A graduate of the University of Richmond School of Law, Abed served as an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney for the City of Norfolk, Virginia. In August 2002, Abed was appointed by former Governor Mark Warner as Commissioner for the Virginia Commission for National and Community Service.

Over the course of the O'Malley-Brown Administration's first term, statewide juvenile homicides have decreased by 43 percent. In Baltimore City, juvenile homicides and non-fatal shootings reached their lowest levels in 30 years. In the course of one year, juvenile homicides in Maryland dropped 21 percent between 2009 and 2010. In August 2010, federal oversight of the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center ended, and Maryland's juvenile facilities

successfully exited from federal oversight.

The Administration also championed the creation of the Juvenile Violence Prevention Initiative, a statewide tool to identify and appropriately supervise youth who are at high risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violent crime. Through collaboration with the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and local law enforcement, the Department of Juvenile Services helped create the Juvenile Dashboard to allow law enforcement officers to quickly access information on DJS youth by tapping into a wide variety of databases and records. In addition, Operation Safe Kids, a public health-based approach to providing intensive services to high-risk youth in Baltimore City, was created and expanded to include Prince George's County. Under Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown's leadership, the Administration has increased the use of evidence-based programs, such as functional family therapy, to place youth within their communities rather than in facilities away from home. Since January 2007, the use of these programs has driven down the number of out-of-home placements for DJS youth by 12 percent.

**Governor's Commission on
Middle Eastern American
Affairs**

301 West Preston Street
15th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21201

Phone: 410-767-7925

Fax: 410-333-7542

E-mail: MidEast@goci.state.md.us

**"Serving the Middle Eastern
American community through out the
State at the highest executive level."**



On October 11, 2007, Governor Martin O'Malley signed the Executive Order to create the Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs. The Commission was created to address the need for State agencies to respond effectively to the needs and concerns of Maryland citizens with ancestral heritage in Middle Eastern countries.

The Commission was appointed by the Governor and his administration in order to address the issues facing the Middle Eastern American community at the highest level of the Executive Branch of Maryland State Government.

We're on the web!
www.middleeastern.maryland.gov

Events Around Maryland and the Metro Area

August 28:
Maryland State Fair
Timonium Fair Grounds

September 1:
NAAP-DC Networking Event
Eden Rooftop, 1716 I Street,
NW, Washington, DC

September 2-4:
The Baltimore Grand Prix
401 E Pratt Street

September 7:
"What the West Doesn't
Know About Islam"
7:30pm, 120 Cherry Street SE
Vienna, VA 22180
For more information, visit:
www.alhewar.com

September 21:
Islamic Finance Forum
For more information, email:
Amanda@bilateralchamber.org

September 22:
Governor's Commission on
Middle Eastern American
Affairs Meeting, Location TBD
For more information, visit:
middleeastern.maryland.gov

September 30:
ANEAR Annual Dinner
For more information, visit:
www.anera.org/dinner



If you would like to submit an announcement to post, please email it to: MidEast@goci.state.md.us. Every announcement must contain a date, title, location, time, phone number or website. We reserve the right to edit or delete any submissions.